

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, PINT, KS, KN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PARK'S NEWS CONFERENCE

REF: SEOUL 8690

SUMMARY: IN TWO HOUR FORTY MINUTE TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE ON JAN. 14, PRESIDENT PARK GAVE LENGTHY PRESENTATION OF CURRENT ROK PROBLEMS BUT BROKE NO NEW GROUND. HE AGAIN EMPHASIZED NORTH KOREAN THREAT TO ROK WHICH, COUPLED WITH ECONOMIC CRISIS, PROVIDED RATIONALE FOR MOST OF HIS OBSERVATIONS ON DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLITICAL QUESTIONS. HE MAINTAINED UNYIELDING LINE ON OPPOSITION DEMANDS TO CHANGE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION BUT TONE WAS NOT PARTICULARLY HARSH. CITING EVIDENCE OF NORTH KOREAN BELLIGERENT ATTITUDE, PARK SAID ROKG MUST STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SECURITY WHILE CONTINUING EFFORTS AT DIALOGUE WITH NORTH AND DIPLOMACY AIMED AT PEACEFUL UNIFICATION. HE REITERATED CALL FOR NON-AGGRESSION PACT WITH NORTH AND OPEN DOOR POLICY TOWARD COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND SAID THAT UNC COULD BE DISSOLVED IF ALTERNATE ARMISTICE ARRANGEMENT MADE. END SUMMARY.

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CHANGE IN CONSTITUTION

1. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION ON INTERNAL SECURITY, PARK TOOK UNYIELDING BUT NOT PARTICULARLY HARSH LINE. HE INSISTED YUSHIN CONSTITUTION WOULD NOT BE CHANGED AS LONG AS THREAT FROM NORTH CONTINUED TO EXIST. HE NOTED THAT CONSTITUTION HAD BEEN APPROVED BY AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF POPULATION IN 1972 REFERENDUM AND THAT SYSTEM IT HAD ESTABLISHED HAD ALLOWED ROK TO PROSPER ECONOMICALLY IN RELATIVE SECURITY AND STABILITY. HE CLAIMED THAT IF YUSHIN SYSTEM WERE ABOLISHED, COUNTRY WOULD PERISH. POINTING OUT THAT ONLY SMALL NUMBER OF CRITICS WANTED TO AMEND CONSTITUTION, HE CASTIGATED THEM FOR MINIMIZING THREAT FROM NORTH KOREA AND FOR URGING AN "ILLUSORY" FORM OF DEMOCRACY WHICH WAS NOT SUITED TO ROK AT PRESENT TIME.

2. PARK ALSO ASSAILED CRITICS FOR THEIR ALLEGED CLAIMS THAT THERE WAS NO FREEDOM IN KOREA. HE SAID THAT THEIR PUBLIC CALLS FOR SUCH THINGS AS CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND HIS RESIGNATION, ALL COVERED WIDELY IN PRESS, WERE IN THEMSELVES PROOF OF EXISTENCE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS. PARK ALSO COMPLAINED THAT HIS CRITICS FREQUENTLY APPEALED TO FOREIGN PRESS, ACADEMICS AND U.S. CONGRESSMEN IN ATTEMPTS TO PUT PRESSURE ON HIS GOVT. THIS, HE SAID, CONSTITUTED TRADITIONAL ATTITUDE OF "FLUNKYISM" WHICH HE WAS TRYING TO ABOLISH IN KOREA.

3. PARK DEFENDED ARREST OF STUDENTS AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN NATIONAL FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC YOUTH AND STUDENTS (NFDYS) AS NECESSARY MOVE TO STOP THOSE WHO WERE PLOTTING AGAINST GOVT. HE INSISTED THAT HE WOULD NOT PERMIT ANY ACTIONS AIMED AT BRINGING GOVERNMENT DOWN BY VIOLENCE.

NORTH KOREAN THREAT

4. SAYING THAT FOUR POWERS SURROUNDING KOREA HAVE MADE NO PROGRESS TOWARD DETENTE ON KOREAN PENINSULA, THAT NORTH KOREANS HAVE SABOTAGED SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE, AND THAT AUG. 15 INCIDENT AND DMZ TUNNELS HAVE REVEALED GRAVE NATURE OF NORTH KOREAN THREAT, PARK STATED THAT ROK MUST MAINTAIN ITS NATIONAL POWER, WHICH IS THE PURPOSE OF YUSHIN SYSTEM. HE POINTED OUT THAT BOTH INSTRUCTIONS TO MADAME PARK'S ASSASSIN MUN SE-KWANG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND COMMENCEMENT OF TUNNELING DATE BACK TO PERIOD IN 1972 RIGHT AFTER JOINT COMMUNIQUE. HE SAID THAT MORE TUNNELS WOULD BE FOUND, AND THAT THEY ARE DUE FOR COMPLETION IN OCT. 1975. HE ALSO CITED CONSTRUCTION OF NORTH KOREAN AIR AND ARTILLERY FACILITIES NEAR DMZ, AND SAID THAT US DOD OFFICIALLY SUPPORTS ROK ESTIMATE OF NORTH KOREAN THREAT.

SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE

5. ALTHOUGH NOT EXPECTING MUCH FROM TALKS WITH NORTH, PARK SAID ROK WILL PURSUE ALL EFFORTS TO MAKE SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE A SUCCESS. HE BLAMED NORTH FOR LACK OF PROGRESS IN TALKS, SAYING THAT PYONGYANG'S OBJECTIVE IN DIALOGUE IS TO WEAKEN SOUTH IN ORDER TO COMMUNIZE SOUTH BY FORCE, WHEREAS SEOUL WANTS TO REDUCE TENSION AND WORK TOWARD REUNIFICATION. PARK CALLED ON NORTH KOREANS TO ACCEPT HIS EARLIER PROPOSAL CALLING FOR STEP-BY-STEP CONTACTS LEADING TO PEACEFUL UNIFICATION. FOREIGN RELATIONS

7. ASSERTING THAT ROK HAS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS EFFORTS AT PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION, PARK OUTLINED A THREE-PART DIPLOMATIC POLICY FOR 1975 AIMED AT NATIONAL SECURITY, ECONOMIC PROGRESS, AND PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION. HE SAID US-ROK FRIENDSHIP WAS STRENGTHENED BY PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT AND MADE NOTE OF US SUPPORT OF ROK SECURITY AND ROK POLICY AND US INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION. ROK WILL MAKE INCREASED EFFORTS FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH JAPAN IN LIGHT OF MUTUAL INTERESTS IN ASIAN SECURITY AND PROSPERITY, DESPITE STRAINS RESULTING FROM AUGUST 15 INCIDENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT JAPAN IS CLOSEST TO ROK GEOGRAPHICALLY AND HISTORICALLY. REAFFIRMING HIS JUNE 23, 1973 FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT, PARK SAID ROK WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP ITS DOORS OPEN TO NON-HOSTILE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS AND IS READY TO PARTICIPATE WITH NORTH IN UN. UN COMMAND

7. PARK SAID HE DOES NOT EXPECT US TROOPS TO STAY IN ROK PERMANENTLY BUT THAT US AND ROK AGREE THEY SHOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT WITHDRAW IN VIEW OF THREAT BY NORTH KOREA, WHOSE OBJECTIVE IS WITHDRAWAL OF US TROOPS. POINTING OUT THAT UNC AND USFK ARE DIFFERENT, PARK SAID THAT ROK IS NOT OPPOSED TO DISMANTLING OF UNC, PROVIDED ALTERNATE ARMISTICE ARRANGEMENT IS ESTABLISHED FIRST.

8. COMMENT: PARK'S DELIVERY WAS ADEPT, FORCEFUL AND HE OFTEN SPOKE AT LENGTH WITH LITTLE NOTICEABLE REFERENCE TO PREPARED TEXT OR NOTES. WHATEVER EFFECT HE MAY HAVE HAD ON INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS OR HIS ENTRENCHED OPPOSITION, HE MAY WELL HAVE GIVEN CONVINCING AND ABLE IMPRESSION TO GENERAL KOREAN VIEWING AUDIENCE.

9. APART FROM REPEATED ASSERTIONS THAT YUSHIN

CONSTITUTION WOULD NOT BE CHANGED, PARK GAVE NO
REAL INDICATION AS TO FUTURE INTERNAL POLICIES. HIS
TONE WAS FIRM BUT HE DID NOT CHARACTERIZE CURRENT LEVEL
OF OPPOSITION AS DANGEROUS NOR DID HE ISSUE ANY THREATS.
FACT THAT HE DESCRIBED OPPOSITION ACTIVITY AS SIGN OF
FREEDOM MAY BE INDICATION OF CONTINUING ROKG WILLINGNESS
TO TOLERATE AT LEAST PRESENT LEVEL OF SUCH ACTIVITY.
IN DISCUSSING NORTH KOREA. PARK WAS FIRM BUT
MAINTAINED READINESS TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE.

10. ECONOMIC PORTIONS OF INTERVIEW FOLLOWING SEPTTEL.
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